

MARENGO COUNTY

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Council Priorities

1. Funding

Marengo County needs access to more funding in order to provide better services for our children.

2. Parenting involvement and development of parenting skills and better utilization of Faith-Based Organizations.

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3. Lack of non-school youth activities

Lack of non- school activities

Issues

Issues are the primary concerns or problems facing children in the county

Early Care Education

Children (0 – 5) are provided opportunities to fully develop emotionally, socially, physically, and cognitively and are ready to succeed.

Lack of child care

Action Steps

- 1) Continue to educate parents at public, private and faith-based programs.
- 2) Continue better screenings and training of child care providers.
- 3) Continue and increase financial assistance for low-income families.
- 4) Develop partnerships with faith-based programs.

Development of parenting skills

Action Steps

- 1) Partnering with faith-based programs.
- 2) Educate parents and help develop better parenting skills.

School readiness

Action Steps

- 1) Increase availability of Head Start, Early Start, etc.
- 2) Increase availability of transportation so families have better access.
- 3) Continue to fund Early Intervention, etc. to provide in-home services to non-school age children to assist in reaching physical and social development.

Economic Security

Children grow up in a financially stable home where the child's basic needs can be met.

Youth employment and training

Action Steps

- 1) More career counseling and aptitude assessments utilizing community and education facilities.
- 2) Need community centers for summer job programs.
- 3) Need mentoring programs utilizing employers, schools, faith-based organizations, etc.
- 4) Diversity and bilingual education.
- 5) Encourage partnership through schools and faith-based organizations.

Providing resources and education for job training for parents and guardians

Action Steps

- 1) More classes for life skills to develop a strong work ethic.
- 2) Access to GED classes
- 3) Access to English as a second language classes.
- 4) Better tutoring and mentoring counseling and aptitude assessment.
- 5) Involve schools, employers, and faith-based organizations to assist in job training.

Education

Children learn the skills necessary to become productive citizens.

Inadequate school funding

Action Steps

- 1) Too many mandated programs (such as pre-school) that are either none funded or under funded.
- 2) The gifted program is a special education area but special education money is not allowed to be used.

Extreme teacher shortage in secondary education (7-12) and special education (K-12)

Action Steps

- 1) Try to get the state to modify the requirements in making it easier to become a certified teacher.

Retaining teachers in rural areas due to competition from suburban areas

Action Steps

- 1) Offer longer contracts as long as it does not extend into tenure.
- 2) Agree to pay for teachers higher degrees as long as they are employed with the school system.

School safety/violence/drugs

Action Steps

- 1) Work more closely with local police in monitoring schools.
- 2) Increase the number of students to be drug tested.
- 3) Develop parenting program to reduce violence.

Health

Children's (0 - 19) physical and mental well-being in the county.

Access to healthcare

Action Steps

- 1) Public awareness through media and public offices of available transportation and health services.
- 2) Satellite health office is needed in South Marengo County.
- 3) Better information distribution of resource directory, pamphlets, etc.
- 4) Work with UAB community partners in assessing needs of South Marengo County.

Additional resources needed to treat children with mental illness and mental retardation

Action Steps

- 1) Provide transportation for consumers in rural areas.
- 2) Enhance awareness and participation in existing programs and services.
- 3) Establish mental health fair in conjunction with the Health Department to increase public awareness provide services and programs for abusing parents and kids.

Teen pregnancy and substance abuse prevention

Action Steps

- 1) Male directed pregnancy prevention needed.
- 2) Pregnancy prevention in general.
- 3) More community and school based programs on prevention.
- 4) Alcohol, tobacco and other drug abuse prevention and intervention.

Parent Involvement Skills

Parents and guardians participation and effectiveness in fostering an environment for children to become mature, responsible and independent adults.

Need a Fatherhood Initiative program for the county

Action Steps

- 1) Reinstate fatherhood initiative programs by applying for grants through Family Resource Centers, etc.
- 2) More parent involvement and participation.
- 3) More tutoring and academic counseling: after school, evening, weekends: help with homework, reading, math, etc.
- 4) Need father direct parenting education and skills development.

Poor parenting skills

Action Steps

- 1) Family counseling to include family support and basic life skills training.
- 2) Information distribution; job fair, resource directory, career day, etc.
- 3) Solicit the assistance of community groups such as faith-based organizations, schools, social and civic groups to assist in teaching parenting skills.

Truancy and poor school attendance

Action Steps

- 1) Truancy prevention/intervention: attendance follow-up, absentee monitoring, etc.
- 2) Increase truancy personnel so that home visits can be made.

Safety

Children live free of abuse, neglect, crime, and drugs.

Child abuse and neglect

Action Steps

- 1) Parenting education and skills development, in general.
- 2) Family violence prevention/intervention: sex abuse, neglect, battering, therapeutic foster training, etc.
- 3) Sex abuse prevention/intervention: resistance skills training, sex offender programs, etc.
- 4) Crisis intervention: hotline, respite center, etc.
- 5) Emergency assistance: temporary financial aid, housing, clothing, food, etc.

Substance abuse prevention

Action Steps

- 1) Alcohol, tobacco, and other drug abuse prevention/intervention
- 2) Peer support/counseling: teen support, women's support, etc. (AA, Ala-non, etc.)

Safe communities

Action Steps

- 1) Community education/awareness: campaigns, speakers, billboards, etc.
- 2) Involvement of faith-based outreach programs and community development.

Policy Recommendations

- Stop playing games with Children's Trust Fund money.
- Leave Children's Trust Fund money for children and stop using it for unrelated state agencies.
- Continue funding the Alabama Partnership of Children.
- Continue to adequately fund Medicaid and All Kids.